

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

Emergency Meeting on the Water Treatment System Cooper Rd Mobile Home Park

Meeting Summary

September 20, 2019, 6:00-7:30 pm
Wappinger Town Hall, 20 Middlebush Rd, Wappinger, New York

Opening Statement:

Thank you for attending this meeting on such short notice. Introduction of Department of Behavioral & Community Health staff and other departments and agencies present in the room.

Clean water is essential for health and life. Waterborne disease still inflicts a significant toll in this country due to tainted and unclean water.

Public Water system(s) are responsible for providing an adequate amount of clean, safe (potable) water to the population they serve. There are approximately 650 public water systems in Dutchess County of which approximately 150 serve year-round communities. Most community public water systems are owned by either a municipality or a water authority but some continue to be privately owned. The Department of Behavioral & Community Health regulates the operation, design and quality of public water systems and the operation of mobile home parks in Dutchess County.

Current Situation:

The water system which serves Cooper Road Trailer Park and other users is regulated as a public water system in accordance with [Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code](#). The owner of the Trailer Park is required to ensure that the public water system is operated and tested in accordance with the requirements of the New York State Sanitary Code. The owner of the Trailer Park is also required to operate the Mobile Home Park in accordance with [Part 17, Mobile Home Parks of the New York State Sanitary Code](#).

During the first week of September 2019, the Department of Behavioral & Community Health received notice that the public water system was no longer being operated by a certified operator. That week the Department of Behavioral & Community Health observed during a site visit that a free chlorine residual was not present in the distribution system and a water advisory was distributed to the residents on the same day.

On September 9th, an Emergency Order by the Department of Behavioral & Community Health was served to the owner of Cooper Road Trailer Park ordering that he hire a certified operator by September 13th; that potable water be continuously provided to all tenants; and that specifications be provided by September 13th for new pressure tanks. The owner of Cooper Road

Trailer Park was also ordered to attend an informal hearing on September 18th. The owner of Cooper Road Trailer Park did not attend the informal hearing and to date has not complied with the order.

Effective September 14th, the Department of Behavioral & Community Health appointed the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority as his agent to operate the water system until October 15, 2019.

A second Emergency Order was subsequently served to the Owner of Cooper Road Trailer Park rescinding the permits to operate the Mobile Home Park and the Public Water System at Cooper Road Trailer Park. The order also requires that the owner of Cooper Road Trailer Park attend a formal hearing on September 23rd, that the mobile homes at the Cooper Road Trailer Park are hereby declared UNFIT for HUMAN HABITATION and that said mobile homes are to be vacated or removed from the premises by October 15, 2019.

Impact on Residents/tenants:

Without a certified operator to operate the water system, water service of adequate quality and quantity is not available to the residents. Certified water operators maintain equipment and processes to monitor and affect water as it moves from the source, through the treatment and distribution system.

Although a certified operator is not required for the operation of the sewage collection, treatment and disposal systems, said systems also require maintenance and monitoring to prevent contamination of the receiving waters and to prevent raw sewage discharges to the surface of the ground and to prevent raw sewage backups into dwellings.

Given the immediate hardship to residents, we requested and empowered the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority to operate the water system temporarily until **October 15, 2019** so residents have time to find alternate accommodations.

Our foremost concern and goal is the public health and safety of the residents.

Next steps:

This public health crisis is difficult and trying on you, your family, and your life. Dutchess County is here tonight to help you through this by providing information on potential support services and programs. Dutchess County Department of Community & Family Services and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley have presented information on their programs which you may qualify for and how to access those services.

Residents may seek legal advice from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley or other law firm to understand their rights and available options including the formation of a cooperative to operate the mobile home park.

Residents may contact local elected officials regarding any assistance that may be available for the operation and maintenance of the water and sewer infrastructure and regarding the potential for connecting to central water and sewer.

Residents may see placards labeled “UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION” placed on their doors.

DBCH website will post meeting summary notes, frequently asked questions and the Commissioners Order. The link is <http://www.dutchessny.gov/CooperRoad>

The Department of Behavioral & Community Health will continue its enforcement proceedings with the owner of the mobile home park.

Assistance and Support Services:

Department of Community & Family Services:

Housing: emergency housing unit available to assist, income based eligibility criteria.

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Community-Family-Services/Housing-Assistance.htm>

Temporary Assistance: there is an application process and eligibility is income based. May be able to help with 1st months’ rent and security deposit, food stamps and Medicaid.

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Community-Family-Services/Temporary-Assistance-TA.htm>

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley:

Hotline: 1-877-574-8529 to see if they qualify for our services and open a case if they do qualify.

Options for residents include initiate/file civil lawsuit against owner and/or tenants can form a cooperation.

Has been in communication with New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal about funding opportunities to support mobile home parks.

Has been in communication with the owner, Michael Robilotta, to connect him to Division of Housing and Community Renewal.